(b) The annual carrying cost for 582.78 lakh tonnes of foodgrain stocks is Rs. 13,170 crores calculated at the rate of Rs. 2,260 per tonne, per year.

(c) It is too early to calculate the actual total carrying cost of buffer stock for the whole year 2001-2002 as it will depend upon the total stocks in the central pool, including the stocks taken over from the States. In the Food Corporation of India's Budget Estimates for the year 2001-2002, a provision of Rs. 5,979 crore has been provided for meeting the carrying costs of foodgrains in the central pool.

(d) The value of stocks down-graded as damaged stock during last three years by FCI is as under:—

(Amount, Rs. Lakhs)

1998-99	11,846.02
1999-2000	17,128.06
2000-2001	5,975.23

Import of Sugar

487. PROF. A. LAKSHMISAGAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the heavy sugar stocks in the country, Government propose to stop import of sugar; and

(b) if so, the countries where from sugar is presently being imported and the likely impact on the contractual obligations in the event of stoppage of sugar imports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) Import of sugar has been placed under Open General Licence (OGL) since March 1994. However, in view of the high stocks of sugar with the producers in the country, Government has increased the customs duty on import of sugar to 60% with effect from 9.2.2000 along with continuance of countervailing duty of Rs. 850/- per tonne. As a result import of sugar has declined to 30,612 tonnes during 2000-2001 (April-March) and 21,851 tonnes during 2001-2002 (April-July). Government does not have any proposal to put a ban on the import of sugar. Countries from where sugar has been imported during 2000-2001 and the current year include Brazil, China, Pakistan and South Africa.